

# First 5 Commission of San Diego

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Subject: Legislative Advocacy

Policy Number: CFC-002    Effective Date: May 7, 2001

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## **Purpose**

To establish First 5 Commission of San Diego (“Commission”) policy regarding legislative advocacy.

## **Background**

In response to the passage of Proposition 10, The California Children and Families Act, the Board of Supervisors on December 8, 1998 (71) created the Commission to promote, support and improve early childhood development from the prenatal stage to five years of age. Funding from the Proposition 10 tobacco tax to the Commission is estimated to be approximately \$40,000,000 annually to further these important early childhood programs. By statute, the Commission is the exclusive County entity charged with strategic planning for and the expenditure of Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues on services for children zero to five and their families.

The Commission has adopted a Strategic Plan to further the goals of the Act . As it implements the Strategic Plan, the Commission is committed to creating a seamless, family-focused, integrated system of services and support for children age zero to five and their families, and to ensuring that every child in San Diego County will enter school physically, mentally, socially and developmentally ready to learn. The Commission is further committed to coordinating and leveraging resources to fulfill its mission.

It is the Commission’s mission, as expressed in its Strategic Plan, to provide proactive leadership to achieve school readiness for children age zero to five by advocating for legislative and policy improvements at the local, State and national levels. The Commission strives to fund services and programs that benefit *all* San Diego children within the target population. Due to funding limitations, not all programs and initiatives can be funded. The Commission's Strategic Plan stresses advocating for legislation or policy to positively impact the lives of children and families, given that every need cannot possibly be met by Proposition 10 funding.

It is appropriate for the Commission to advocate positions on matters impacting local control over the use or the administration of Proposition 10 tax revenue and on issues that relate to improving outcomes for all children age zero to five. The Commission’s efforts at legislative advocacy shall be limited to initiatives that have a direct and significant impact on the Commission’s vision, mission, values and operating principles.

The Board of Supervisors governs all legislative advocacy for the County and has established Board policy for legislative advocacy. Positions recommended by the Commission’s for legislative advocacy shall comply with established Board policy. In addition, County procedures for legislative advocacy shall be followed.

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**Policy**

The Commission's legislative advocacy policy is as follows:

**A. Definition of Legislative Advocacy**

Legislative advocacy includes advocating the legislative priorities of the Commission and the Board of Supervisors relating to early childhood development, from the prenatal period to age five, before members, committees, and staffs of the Legislature, Congress, school boards and executive or administrative agencies of all levels of government, hereinafter referred to as governmental bodies. Legislative advocacy also includes advocacy related to early childhood development, from the prenatal period to age five, on policy and non-policy issues, pending legislation, and written correspondence to legislators and elected/appointed officials.

**B. Advocacy by Commission Members or Commission Staff**

1. Commission legislative advocacy before governmental bodies is appropriate if:

- a) The Commission or the Commission's Executive Director makes a finding that there is a need for the Commission and the County to take a position on legislation or a policy which impacts the Commission's mission or operation and the issue is consistent with the Commission's Strategic Plan or with policy adopted by the Commission. In appropriate cases, the Executive Director shall bring an agenda item before the Commission to seek a Commission determination on the advocacy position; and
- b) The Director of the County Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs makes a finding of, or coordinates action necessary for making a finding that, an identified issue is consistent with Board policy contained in the County Policy Manual, County Legislative Guidelines, or a specific Board action.

2. The procedure for advocating on approved issues is as follows: The Director of the County's Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs, in consultation with the Commission's Executive Director, shall make a determination on a case-by-case basis as to who will advocate on behalf of the Commission. Either County or the Commission staff may be authorized by the Director of the County's Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs.

**C. Responsibility of Commission Staff**

1. Annual Responsibilities

- a) Coordinate the preparation and submission of legislative proposals for Board sponsorship.

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- b) Review and submit recommendations to the Commission for updates to the Board's Legislative Guidelines before submitting those recommendations to the Board.
- c) Participate in sunset reviews of previously adopted Board policies affecting children age zero to five or their families, or act as a Responsible Department in the preparation of new policy, seeking Commission direction or approval as necessary.

**2. Routine Responsibilities**

- a) Monitor legislative activities at the local, state, and national levels, identifying initiatives that may impact Commission programs, operations, or funding.
- b) Utilize information available from the California Children and Families Commission, the California Children and Families Association, and other affiliates to help form recommendations;
- c) Identify legislative initiatives that require advocacy because they directly or significantly impact the Commission.
- d) Initiate action as necessary, in compliance with Commission and Board policy, to:
  - 1. Place an item on the Commission agenda for action;
  - 2. Prepare Board letters or other correspondence for Board approval in coordination with the County Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs;
  - 3. Prepare legislative analyses in coordination with County Counsel, the County Health and Human Services Agency, and other County departments potentially impacted by the legislative proposal;
  - 4. Prepare testimony, as needed, within County legislative advocacy policy guidelines;
  - 5. Prepare correspondence, as needed, within County legislative advocacy policy guidelines; and
  - 6. Respond, without prior specific authorization, to requests for information from elected officials or others on non-policy items, *e.g.*, technical and factual in nature. If the nature of the request is not clear, Commission staff shall obtain direction from the Director of the County Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

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**D. Commission Member Responsibilities**

Coordinate with the Commission's Executive Director on contacts from:

1. Elected officials requesting information that is policy, non-policy or legislative in nature; and
2. Constituents requesting Commission advocacy on bills.

**Procedure for Legislative Analysis**

Proposed legislative initiatives submitted to the Commission for recommended advocacy will be given a priority rating as follows:

- 1) Priority A – The legislation directly and significantly impacts the Commission.  
Positions can be:
  - a. Support: Furthers the goals of the Commission and is consistent with the Strategic Plan. The bill is viable and the Commission and the Board should actively advocate for change, providing letters of support and testimony, as needed.
  - b. Support if Amended: Generally positive legislation but amendments would improve the legislation.
  - c. Oppose unless Amended: The legislation negatively impacts the Commission, its programs, or children age zero to five and their families, but the negative aspects of the legislation can be addressed if the legislation is amended.
  - d. Oppose: The legislation negatively impacts the Commission, its programs or children age zero to five and their families and does not warrant staff time to remedy, or cannot be improved by amendment.
- 2) Priority B – The legislation does not have a direct impact on the Commission's initiatives or operations, is consistent with its objectives and priorities, but would potentially benefit a State or community partner. Will passively support or passively oppose upon request only.
- 3) Priority C – The legislation relates to the Commission's objectives and priorities and will be monitored.

Sunset Review: March 2005

Approved:

March 10, 2003

Date

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